

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A ~~An~~-tomosynthesis imaging method for creating a three-dimensional reconstruction of a target element comprising:
acquiring radiation absorbance images of the target element by moving a radiation source through a limited plurality of angles; and
applying an iterative reconstruction algorithm to the radiation absorbance images to generate ~~the a~~ three-dimensional reconstruction of the target element using tomosynthesis; and
displaying at least a portion of the three-dimensional reconstruction of the target element on a display;
wherein the iterative reconstruction algorithm is applied using cone-beam forward projection and back projection.
2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the radiation absorbance images are acquired by transmitting x-ray energy from an x-ray source through the target element to an x-ray detector.
3. (Original) A method according to claim 2, wherein the x-ray detector is a digital x-ray detector having a plurality of detector pixels.
4. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein radiation absorbance images are acquired through a number of angles that is less than or equal to about 100.
5. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein radiation absorbance images are acquired through a range of angles that is limited to only between about 30 and 120 degrees.
6. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the iterative reconstruction algorithm is a maximum likelihood algorithm.

7. (Original) A method according to claim 3, wherein the three-dimensional reconstruction of the target element is represented as an array of voxels having a uniform or non-uniform size in three-dimensions.
8. (Original) A method according to claim 7, wherein a forward projection step is implemented by ray tracing from the x-ray source to a detector pixel and the forward projection of the target element is obtained by repeating the ray tracing for each detector pixel to calculate an attenuation value for each voxel.
9. (Original) A method according to claim 8, wherein a back projection step is implemented by locating detector pixels containing attenuation information relating to a selected voxel and using those pixels to update the attenuation value of the selected voxel.
10. (Original) A method according to claim 9, wherein the back projection step includes performing a back projection for at least each voxel corresponding to a three-dimensional reconstruction of the target element.
11. (Original) A method according to claim 6, wherein the maximum-likelihood estimation is implemented using an expectation-maximization algorithm.
12. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the target element is at least a portion of a human patient.
13. (Original) A method according to claim 12, wherein the target element is a breast of a female human patient.
14. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein a number of iterations is less than or equal to about 10.
15. (Currently Amended) A system for three-dimensional ~~tomosynthesis~~ ^{tomosynthesis} imaging of a target element comprising:

an image acquisition element for obtaining a plurality of images of the target element from a plurality of angles having:

a radiation source positionable at a plurality of angles with respect to the target element; and

a radiation detector positioned so as to detect radiation emitted by the radiation source passing through the target element and determine a plurality of attenuation values for radiation passing through the target element to establish a radiation absorbance projection image of the target element for a particular radiation source angle; and

a processor configured to apply an iterative reconstruction algorithm to radiation absorbance projection images of the target element obtained from a plurality of radiation source angles to generate a three-dimensional reconstruction of the target element using tomosynthesis wherein the iterative reconstruction algorithm is applied using cone-beam forward projection and back projection.

16. (Original) A system according to claim 15, wherein the radiation detector is a digital x-ray detector having a plurality of detector pixels.

17. (Original) A system according to claim 15, wherein radiation absorbance projection images are acquired through a number of angles that is less than or equal to about 100.

18. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 15, wherein radiation absorbance projection images are acquired through a range of angles that is limited to only between about 30 and 120 degrees.

19. (Original) A system according to claim 15, wherein the iterative reconstruction algorithm is a maximum likelihood algorithm.

20. (Original) A system according to claim 16, wherein the three-dimensional reconstruction of the target element is represented as an array of voxels having a uniform or non-uniform size in three-dimensions.

21. (Original) A system according to claim 20, wherein a forward projection step is implemented by ray tracing from the radiation source to a detector pixel and the forward projection of the target element is obtained by repeating the ray tracing for each detector pixel to calculate an attenuation value for each voxel.
22. (Original) A system according to claim 21, wherein a back projection step is implemented by locating detector pixels containing attenuation information relating to a selected voxel and using those pixels to update the attenuation value of the selected voxel.
23. (Original) A system according to claim 22, wherein the back projection step includes performing a back projection for at least each voxel corresponding to a three-dimensional reconstruction of the target element.
24. (Original) A system according to claim 19, wherein the maximum-likelihood estimation is implemented using an expectation-maximization algorithm.
25. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program for three-dimensional ~~tomosynthesis~~ imaging of a target element from a plurality of radiation absorbance projection images obtained at different angles from an image acquisition element having a radiation source positionable at a plurality of angles with respect to the target element and a radiation detector positioned so as to detect radiation emitted by the radiation source passing through the target element and determine a plurality of attenuation values for radiation passing through the target element to establish a radiation absorbance projection image of the target element for a particular radiation source angle, the computer program code comprising:
computer program code for applying an iterative reconstruction algorithm to the radiation absorbance projection images of the target element obtained from a plurality of radiation source angles to generate the three-dimensional reconstruction of the target element using tomosynthesis and displaying at least a portion of the three-dimensional reconstruction of the target element wherein the iterative reconstruction algorithm is applied using cone-beam forward projection and back projection.

26. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program according to claim 25, wherein the radiation detector is a digital x-ray detector having a plurality of detector pixels.
27. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program according to claim 25, wherein radiation absorbance projection images are acquired through a number of angles that is less than or equal to about 100.
28. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program according to claim 25, wherein radiation absorbance projection images are acquired through a range of angles that is limited to only between about 30 and 120 degrees.
29. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program according to claim 25, wherein the iterative reconstruction algorithm is a maximum likelihood algorithm.
30. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program according to claim 26, wherein the three-dimensional reconstruction of the target element is represented as an array of voxels having a uniform or non-uniform size in three-dimensions.
31. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program according to claim 30, wherein a forward projection step is implemented by ray tracing from the radiation source to a detector pixel and the forward projection of the target element is obtained by repeating the ray tracing for each detector pixel to calculate an attenuation value for each voxel.
32. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program according to claim 31, wherein a back projection step is implemented by locating detector pixels containing attenuation information relating to a selected voxel and using those pixels to update the attenuation value of the selected voxel.

33. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program according to claim 32, wherein the back projection step includes performing a back projection for at least each voxel corresponding to a three-dimensional reconstruction of the target element.

34. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program according to claim 29, wherein the maximum-likelihood estimation is implemented using an expectation-maximization algorithm.